

Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS)

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is MERS?

A: Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) is a viral respiratory illness. The virus was first reported in 2012 in Saudi Arabia. It is different from any other coronaviruses that have been found in people before.

Q: Why is it sometimes called MERS-CoV?

A: MERS-CoV is the acronym for Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus, the virus that causes MERS. When referring to the virus and not the illness, use this acronym. When referring to the illness, use MERS.

Q: What are the symptoms and complications that MERS can cause?

A: Fever, cough, shortness of breath. In some cases diarrhea, nausea and/or vomiting were experienced.

Q: How does the virus spread?

A: MERS-CoV has spread from ill people to others through close contact, such as caring for or living with an infected person. Infected people have spread MERS-CoV to others in healthcare settings, such as hospitals. Researchers studying MERS have not seen any spreading of MERS-CoV in the community.

Q: How can I help protect myself?

A: Wash your hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds, and help young children do the same. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw the tissue in the trash. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. Avoid personal contact, such as kissing, or sharing cups or eating utensils, with sick people.

Q: Is there a vaccine?

A: Currently, there is no vaccine available to protect against MERS.

Q: What are the treatments?

A: Treatment is supportive of symptoms.

Q: Is MERS-CoV the same as the SARS virus?

A: No. MERS-CoV is not the same coronavirus that caused severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) in 2003. However, like the SARS virus, MERS-CoV is most similar to coronaviruses found in bats. CDC is still learning about MERS.

Q: Why are local nationals wearing masks?

A: Asian people wear surgical masks to combat the harmful effects of pollution and prevent the spread of colds. In Korea it is considered 'polite' to wear a mask if you are suffering from a cold in order to prevent it from spreading.

Q: Should I be evaluated for MERS?

A: Please see the screening questionnaire on the following page.

For More Information See the Links Below:

[Centers for Disease Control - MERS\(<http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/about/index.html>\)](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/mers/about/index.html)

[World Health Organization – MERS \(\[http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/\]\(http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/\)\)](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/coronavirus_infections/en/)

Questions can be directed to the 51st Medical Group Public Health Flight
DSN: 784-4494 or COMM: 031-661-4494

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MERS Screening Questionnaire

Answer the questions below and follow the key to see if you need to contact your health care provider about MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome).

SECTION I

1. Have you travelled in the past 14 days to the Middle East?
☐Yes, ☐No
2. Have you been in contact with someone who you know
 - a. In past 14 days travelled to the Middle East AND
 - b. has a fever and cough or shortness of breath☐Yes, ☐No
3. Have you been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed or is under observation for MERS
☐Yes, ☐No
4. Have you stayed overnight (stayed as patient or visited someone) at a Korean Hospital in the last 14 days? ☐Yes (note the facility), ☐No

If you answered **YES** to any questions go to SECTION II.

If you answered **NO** to all of these questions **STOP here**: YOU ARE NOT AT RISK FOR MERS. Please contact your Primary Care team during normal business hours for further clinical questions or Public Health for information.

SECTION II

5. Have you had a fever? A fever is a temperature recorded as equal or greater to 100.4°F or 38°C.
☐Yes, ☐No
6. Have you had a cough, shortness of breath, or wheezing? ☐Yes, ☐No

If you answered **YES** to a question in SECTION I and also **YES** to question in SECTION II, during normal clinic hours, contact the 51 MDG at 784-2555, and after normal duty hours, at 784-2066 to discuss further evaluation.

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